



## **Hell And Its Punishments By Rev T Roche C.SS.R**

.Outside the Church at the present time the doctrine of hell is practically ignored. It is brushed aside as out of date, the relic of a bygone age. To speak of hell and its punishments is regarded, as Father Faber puts it: “A vulgar subject for vulgar people.” The prophet Isaias describes the so-called Christians of the present day, who believe only what pleases their fancy, in the following manner: “A people that will not hear the word of God. Who say to the seers: see not. And to them that behold— behold not for us those things that are right. Speak unto us pleasant things.” (Is. xxx, 10.) Speak to us of God’s goodness, of His love, of heaven, of anything in a word that is interesting and entertaining; but of sin, of God’s Justice, above all, of hell and its torments—not for us these things that are right—speak unto us pleasant things. And what shall we say of the modern “seers” who see not, and who, Sunday after Sunday, preach to their hearers “pleasant things”? The prophet Ezechiel cries out against all such: “Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow, and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age.” (Ezech. xiii, 18.)

**prepared by infractus-phasmatis**

---

This ebook is created using [MobileBooklet.com](http://MobileBooklet.com)

# **The Catholic Church Alone Proclaims The Doctrine Of Hell And Its Punishments.**

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:31PM*

The commission she has received from her Divine Founder is to convert the nations to the truth, not to adapt the truth to them. In the matter of faith and morals, her duty is to control the minds and the hearts of men, not to be controlled or influenced by them. "It is surely an unpardonable offence on the part of some modern preachers, often for the sake of notoriety, to waver and hesitate in fully declaring the truth of the eternal punishment of hell. In the face of the momentous interests at stake, such a mode of action is not charity but cruelty. For if so terrible a doom awaits the finally impenitent, the surest guarantee for escaping it hereafter, is not to forget it now. If the doctrine of eternal punishment be a revealed truth, it is treason to God and treachery to men to withhold or disguise it, or tamper with it, because we may choose to think it better to leave them in ignorance of what He has thought it better to reveal." (Raupert, "Hell and Its Problems.")

Our loving Saviour has revealed to us the punishments of hell in order to lead us more securely to heaven. We should serve God out of love and not through fear of punishment; for, as the Apostle says, we have not received the spirit of fear, the spirit of the slave, but the adoption of sons. At the same time, almost every page of the Scriptures proclaims the blessedness of those who fear God: "Beatus vir qui timet

Dominum.” (Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.) (Ps. iii.) God demands of us the homage of a fear that is holy, filial and reverential. The Christian attitude in this respect is perhaps best summed up in the words of the Imitation: “He that loves God with his whole heart neither fears death, nor punishment, nor judgment, nor hell; because perfect love gives secure access to God. But he that is yet delighted with sin, no wonder if he be afraid of death and judgment and hell. It is good, however, that if love as yet reclaim thee not from evil, at least the fear of hell restrain thee. But he that lays aside the fear of God will not be able to continue long in good, but will quickly fall into the snares of the devil.” (Imitation of Christ, Ch. 25.) In a word, our religion is a religion of love, but it does not exclude a salutary fear.

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# THE EXISTENCE OF HELL

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:32PM*

Voltaire, the French infidel, was once complimented by one of his disciples, who wrote to him: "I congratulate you that you have at last convinced me that there is no hell." To which Voltaire replied: "Lucky young man to be so convinced. I wish I could convince myself that there is no hell." Only those who deny the existence of God can deny the existence of hell. Even the pagans, following the light of reason alone, believed in a place of punishment for the wicked after death. The first page of the Catechism tells us: "There is but one God, Who rewards the good and punishes the wicked." No one can read the Gospel without being struck by the frequency with which Christ Our Lord stressed the doctrine of hell and its torments. It will suffice for our purpose to give one or two examples of such passages. One of the most striking of these is the parable of the rich glutton and of the beggar Lazarus, who lay at his gate. "And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died; and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you, there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from

hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither.” (Luke xvi., 22 seq.) We are all familiar with the graphic description of the Last Judgment given in Our Lord’s own words: “And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left. . . . Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv, 31 seq.) But the most terrifying of all Our Lord’s warnings against hell is found in the ninth chapter of St. Mark: “And if thy hand scandalise thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalise thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting than having two feet to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. For everyone shall be salted with fire.” (Mark ix, 42 seq.) Our Lord’s meaning is clear: we must not count the cost; we must be ready to make any sacrifice in order to avoid sin, lead a good life, and so escape the unquenchable fire and the worm that dieth not. The same thought was expressed by Our Lord in other words: “For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul.” (Matt. xvi, 26.) The faith of Catholics in the existence of hell is thus

expressed in the Athanasian Creed: “They that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.”

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# THE PUNISHMENTS OF HELL First— The Loss Of God

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:34PM*

Although the generality of people imagine that the fire which torments the wicked is the greatest of the pains of hell, yet it is not so. By far the most excruciating torment of all, and by far the most intolerable, is the privation of the Beatific Vision, and the thought of being deprived of it for ever. Hence it is put first by Our Lord in the sentence to be pronounced at the Last Judgment: "Depart from Me." In this life we cannot realise how the pain of loss constitutes the chief torment of hell, how, in fact, it makes hell to be hell. To understand it in some measure at least, we know that the soul was created for God, created to enjoy God, that God alone can fully satisfy its yearning for happiness. St. Augustine has said: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O God." Though it does not seem correct to say that the condemned soul at judgment will see God for a moment, yet some flash of light must pierce the darkened mind, revealing to it the infinite Beauty and Goodness of God. Then will the soul rush forward with an irresistible and overwhelming impulse towards that God for Whom it was created. Astronomers tell us that a meteor, by virtue of the law of gravity, rushes towards the earth at the rate of over thirty miles a second. In like manner, will the soul feel itself drawn impetuously to God with all the vehemence and energy of its nature. But who can describe the wild and fierce anguish of the sinner as he feels himself inexorably held back by an Omnipotent hand, pitilessly held down by the guilt of his



sins. How he will struggle in an agony of suffocation, when he realises that between himself and God there is fixed a chasm which he can never pass, when the terrible words, "Depart from Me," will re-echo in his soul for all eternity. Hell, then, essentially means the loss of God. The loss of God, said St. Augustine, is as great as God Himself.

### St. John Chrysostom on the Loss of God

"Now I know that many tremble only at the fire of hell, but I affirm that the loss of the glory of heaven is a far greater punishment. And if it be not possible to exhibit it such in words, this is nothing marvellous. For neither do we know the blessedness of those good things that we should clearly perceive the misery of being deprived of them. No doubt the fire of hell is intolerable, yet, though one suppose a thousand hells of fire, he will utter nothing like what it will be, to be excluded from the glory of heaven, to be hated by Christ, to hear from His lips: "Depart from Me. . . . I know you not." Yea, better surely to endure a thousand thunderbolts, than to see that face of mildness turning away from us, and that eye of peace not enduring to look on us." (Homily XXIII on St. Matthew.)

## Second—The Fire Of Hell

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:35PM*

Although, as we have said, the loss of God is incomparably the greatest of the torments of hell, yet it was the pain of fire that Our Lord invariably stressed. Ardently desiring the salvation of all, He wished to inspire horror into the hearts of men, of the dreadful torments awaiting the wicked after death. He would, as St. Bernard says, save us from hell through hell itself. It was the love of the Sacred Heart that urged Him to this, so that a lively fear of the dread abyss of fire might be a powerful motive to avoid sin, to walk in the way of the Commandments, and so enter into the joys of heaven. This was the reason of the oft-repeated warning of the Gospel—of the unquenchable fire, the worm that dieth not, the outer darkness, the weeping and gnashing of teeth. How different the reaction of the modern world to the doctrine of the fire of hell! The following from a popular writer may be taken as the mentality of non-Catholics in this respect: “The whole conception is wicked, shocking and monstrous. Is it conceivable that Jesus could have taught such a doctrine?” It is evidently neither wicked nor shocking to contradict the plain and emphatic language of Our Saviour in the Gospels.

With regard to the nature of the fire of hell, it is certain that it is real, material, corporeal fire. This is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. The language of the Scriptures leaves no room whatever for figure or metaphor here. It is sufficient to recall the words of the sentence to be pronounced on the wicked: “Depart from Me into everlasting

fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” Here is a fire specially created, specially prepared—an external agent, outside of, and different from, its victim, and the cause of his sufferings. We need only add here what is said in the Apocalypse: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire (the pool burning with fire and brimstone).” (Apoc. xx, 15.) If a Catholic refused to admit the reality of the fire of hell, holding that it was merely a metaphorical expression for some internal, mental anguish, he could not be accused of formal heresy, as the Church has not given any solemn definition on the question; but he would be certainly guilty of grave sin against the Faith. In April, 1890, the Sacred Penitentiary at Rome was asked whether a penitent who declared to his confessor, that, in his opinion, the term “hell fire” was only a metaphor to express the internal pains of the wicked, might be allowed to hold such an opinion, and be absolved. The answer was as follows: “Such penitents must be diligently instructed, and, if pertinacious, must not be absolved.” Because the fire of hell is true material fire, we must not conclude that it is identical with the fire of this earth. Whatever points of resemblance there may be between them, there are certainly many differences. The one is prepared by God as the instrument of His Justice, the other comes from God as the Author of Nature. Unlike the fire of earth, the fire of hell burns but does not consume. The fire of this world acts on matter only, the fire of hell acts immediately on spirit—on the demons and on the souls of the reprobate now separated from their bodies.

We cannot understand how a material fire can act on, and cause suffering to, a purely spiritual being. We can only say with St. Augustine: “It will do so in strange but true ways

—“*miris sed veris modis.*” This corporeal fire shall torment both men and demons for all that they are incorporeal. Christ hath spoken it—the fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (“*De Civitate Dei*,” C.X.)

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# Degrees Of Suffering In The Fire Of Hell

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:38PM*

Although all the reprobate shall be cast into the same fire, their torment shall not be the same or equal for all. Just as there are various degrees of happiness in heaven, in the same way the sufferings of the wicked in hell shall be proportioned to the guilt of each individual soul. This is not only in accordance with right reason and the Justice of God, but is also contained, at least implicitly, in Holy Scripture. Thus the Apostle writing to the Corinthians says: "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." (2 Cor. v, 10.) The authority of St. Augustine puts the matter beyond all controversy. "We cannot doubt that the sufferings of those who shall be excluded from God's Kingdom are of diverse degrees, some being more severe than others: so that in eternity the various degrees of guilt are visited by varying degrees of torment. For it was not in vain that Our Lord said: "Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida." For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you! (Lk. x, 13)." (Contra Donatistas, iv, 19.)

"The fire of hell," says St. John Chrysostom, "is an intelligent fire, knowing how to distinguish between sinner and sinner,

between the senses or faculties which were used as instruments of crime, following an exact proportion between the punishment and the degree of perversity which it punishes! It meets out punishment to each one in proportion to the offences, reserving the cruellest pains for the greater crimes and the more unpardonable faults. Then, indeed, will those have good reason to know how much they are deceived who pretend it is the same to be damned for a thousand sins as for one. For if a man is condemned to hell for two mortal sins, his punishment will be double that of a man condemned for one alone. And it will be increased three times, ten times, a hundred times, according to the number of sins for which he has been condemned.”

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# Third—The Worm That Dieth Not

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:39PM*

This expression, as is obvious, must be understood in a metaphorical sense. This is the worm of conscience, the deep, unavailing despair, the agonising remorse that tortures the wicked in hell. “Were you created for this?” it will say. “Did you repeat your innocent prayers at your mother’s knee for this! You were a child of God, an heir of heaven, and yet you are in hell! (O fool that I have been—how easily I could have been saved! How easily I could have given up that sinful habit, that wretched companion! O, would that I could live my life over again! Would that an hour were given me in which to repent!” But, alas! Time is no more; out of hell there is no redemption. “If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be.” (Eccles. xi, 3.) Then it is that the reprobate sinner, plunged into the depths of remorse and despair, will cry out to God to annihilate him; he will call upon death to come and put an end to his torments. All in vain; his cries of rage remain unanswered. There he must remain forever; no change, no respite, no relief, no death. “In those days, men shall seek death and shall not find it. And they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.” (Apoc. ix, 6.) The weeping and gnashing of teeth of the lost in hell, especially because of their envy of the just in heaven, are described for us in the Book of Wisdom. “Saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit: these are they whom we had sometime in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered

among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? Or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, but we are consumed in our wickedness. Such things as these the sinners said in hell.” (Ch. v, 3 seq.)

The Apostle St. Paul had before him the thought of hell—where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished—when he wrote to the Hebrews: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (x, 31), and when he warned the Philippians: “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (ii, 12.)

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]



# Fourth—The Eternity Of Hell

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:39PM*

The torments of hell are eternal. This truth of our Faith is set forth in the Athanasian Creed: "They that have done good things shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil things into everlasting fire." The words of Our Lord are unmistakable: "The chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." "Depart from Me into everlasting fire." Can we understand what is meant by the eternity of hell? No—it is entirely beyond our comprehension. Scientists have measured the extent of the earth, the depth of the sea, the dimensions and distances of the stars, but no measure can be found for eternity. No measure can reach the boundary of eternity, because no boundary exists. "O Eternity," exclaims St. Augustine, "what art thou?" "Say what you will of it and you have never said enough. Say that it includes as many millions of years as there are stars in the firmament, grains of sand on the sea-shore, leaves in the trees, drops of water in the ocean, you will never have said enough." And why? Because no time, no matter how long, can have any proportion to eternity. Add millions of years to it and it will not become greater; take away millions of years from it, and it will not grow less. A sinner condemned to hell a thousand years ago can say: "I have now been buried in hell a thousand years"; but he cannot say: "Now I have one hour less to suffer." Eternity remains just as long as it was when he first entered hell. All that one can say to express the duration of eternity is summed up in the words: forever — never. When will the ecstatic delights of heaven come to an end? Never. When will the fire of hell cease to torment the

reprobate? Never. For how long will the ineffable joys of heaven last? Forever. How long will the wicked have to remain in the terrible abyss of hell? Forever. If they had but the faintest glimmer of hope that even after countless ages an end would come to their torments, hell would be converted into Purgatory.

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# **The Intensity Of The Pains Of Hell**

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:40PM*

The intensity of the pains of hell, and especially of the fire of hell, is indicated by the manner in which they are described in Sacred Scripture. For example: "The chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." (Lk. iii, 17.) "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. viii, 12.) "He shall cast them into the furnace of fire. Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire The pool of fire—the pool burning with fire and brimstone." (Apoc. xx, 9.15.)

## **St. Teresa's Description of Hell**

In the life of St. Teresa written by herself she relates the unique experience she had of the intensity of the pains of hell. "I was one day in prayer when I found myself plunged apparently into hell. It was but a moment but it seems to me impossible that I should ever forget it. The entrance seemed to be by a long, narrow pass, like a furnace, very low, dark and close. At the end was a hollow place in the wall, and in that I saw myself confined. There is no exaggeration in what I am saying. I felt a fire in my soul. I cannot see how it is possible to describe it. My bodily sufferings were unendurable. I have undergone most painful sufferings in this life, and, as the physicians say, the greatest that can be borne, yet all these were as nothing compared to what I felt there, especially when I saw that there would be no intermission nor any end to them. If I said that the soul is being continually torn from the body, it would be nothing— for that implies the destruction of life by

the hand of another; but here it is the soul itself that is tearing itself to pieces. I cannot describe the inward fire or that despair, surpassing all torments and all pain. I did not see who it was who tormented me, but I felt myself on fire and torn to pieces, as it seemed to me; and I repeat it, this inward fire and despair are the greatest torments of hell. Our Lord made me really feel those torments, and that anguish of spirit, just as if I had been suffering them in the body there. I have listened to people speaking of these things, and I have at other times dwelt on the various torments of hell. I have read of the diverse tortures, and how the devils tear the flesh with red-hot pincers. But all is as nothing before this; it is a wholly different matter. In short, the one is a reality, the other a picture; and all burning here in this life is as nothing compared with the fire that is there." (Ch. 32, p. a 298.)

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# Hell—A Revelation Of God's Love And Mercy

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:41PM*

It may be asked, how are we to reconcile the awful punishments of hell with the love and mercy of God? In order to understand this difficulty, we must remember that no one can ever be lost by surprise or trapped in his ignorance. It is mortal sin alone that incurs the punishments of hell. Mortal sin is the fuel of the fire of hell. Now, a bad act must have three conditions to be mortally sinful. First, there must be a serious breach of the moral law, in order that the sin may be mortal. Secondly, there must be full advertance to the grave malice of the act; so that if one were half-asleep, or drowsy, or not in full possession of his faculties, the sin would not be mortal. Thirdly, there must be full and free consent. This consent must be perfect, so that a man must wish to choose the wrong quite deliberately. Now, since God gives abundant helps to all to walk in the path of the commandments, whoever incurs the guilt of mortal sin must lay the blame entirely at his own door. Among these helps not the least is the revelation of the torments of hell. Father Faber writes: "I do not think that if we kept in view the perfections of God, we should venture to believe, unless the Church taught us, that there was in creation such a place as hell. When it has been revealed to us, we can perceive not only its reasonableness, but also how admirably it is in keeping with God's mercy. While we shudder at the vision of hell, it makes us nestle closer to Him in love. But to us who have grace given to us, and yet have the power of

resisting it, who are right now but can at any moment go wrong—who can doubt that hell is a pure mercy, a solemn passage in God's pathetic eloquence, pleading with us to save our souls and to go to Him in heaven. There is no class of Christians to whom hell is not an assistance. The conversion of a sinner is never complete without the fear of hell. Otherwise the work cannot be depended upon. It has a flaw in its origin and the seed of decay in its root. It is unstable and insecure. It is short-lived and unpersevering, like the seed in Our Saviour's parable which fell upon a rock, sprang up for a season and then withered away. Hell teaches us God, when we are too gross to learn Him otherwise. It lights up the depth of sin's malignity, that we may look down, and tremble and grow wise. Its fires turn to water and quench the fiery darts of the tempter. They rage around us, so that we dare not rise up from prayer. They follow us like the many-tongued pursuing flames of a burning prairie, and drive us swiftly on, and out of breath, along the path of God's commandments. The false delicacy of modern times in keeping back the scaring images of hell, is a formidable danger to the sanctity as well as to the faith of men." ("The Creator and the Creature.")

In his book, "Hell and Its Problems," Raupert, to the same effect, writes: "It is certainly not the love of God that restrains even refined and cultivated people from the indulgence of their passions, and from entering upon crooked and forbidden paths in the various relationships of life. What does restrain them is the sense and fear of punishment—in the form of dishonour and loss of social prestige in the temporal order, and of dimly discerned perhaps, but nevertheless conceivably serious consequences in the spiritual order. It cannot be accidental, surely, that Holy Scripture contains far more

warnings of hell than promises of heaven. He who searches the hearts and reigns knows what truth is best calculated to stay and direct the weak and frail mind of man. I feel confident that when the secret history of each saved soul comes hereafter to be revealed, it will be found „that the fear of hell has saved more souls than the promises of heaven. Although fear is not the highest motive to virtue, it is the most common nevertheless, and in the critical moments of life the most powerful one beyond doubt.”

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# The Great Gate Of Hell

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:42PM*

On one occasion Our Lord warned His Apostles, saying: "Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matt. x, 28.) God has placed on the shore of eternity two great lights to guide us on our path through life: the red light of hell, as a warning and a deterrent, and the green light of heaven, to give us hope and encouragement. We should, therefore, fear God, and fear hell, which is for all of us a dread possibility. "We should tremble," says St. Alphonsus, "at the thought of being lost, and tremble not so much at the thought of hell, as of sin, which alone can send us there." But there is one sin which we must avoid above and beyond all others, if we are to escape hell. When we study the black catalogue of sins we find one that stands out blacker and deeper than all the rest; one that can boast of more victims than any other. Where other vices destroy their hundreds, this destroys its thousands. It is the sin that God hates with a special hatred, the sin that wrung from His lips the cry of sorrow: "It repenteth me that I have made man on the earth"; the sin that brought down from heaven fire and brimstone, that reduced to ashes the wicked cities of the plain; the sin of which St. Alphonsus says, that, in his deliberate opinion, more men and women are eternally lost through sins of the flesh, not only than through any other sin taken singly, but than through all other sins put together. "I hesitate not to affirm," says the holy Doctor, "that all those who are lost are lost on account of sins of impurity, or, at all events, are not lost without them." This, then, is the wide



gate through which the vast majority of sinners enter into hell. Our Lord said to His disciples: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there are who go in thereat." (Matt. vii, 13.)

---

[Hell And Its Punishments by Rev T Roche C.SS.R]

# Conclusion

---

*Published: 29-Sep-2011 01:42PM*

Objections are sometimes raised by non-Catholics to the doctrine of hell and its punishments—God is good, they say, and He is too merciful to condemn anyone to an eternity in the fire of hell. But God is not only good, He is also infinitely just. The answer of St. Augustine to all objections against the fire of hell and the eternity of hell, is: “Christ hath spoken it.” God has said it, and His word is true. Moreover, God does not send any soul to hell. Men cast themselves into hell. The Scripture testifies to the truth of this; as, for example: “What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.” (Gal. vi, S.) And again: “Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose, shall be given him.” (Ecclus. xv, 18.) Before man is heaven and hell, that which he shall choose shall be given him. When we lean over the edge of the abyss, and peer down into the fiery depths of hell, we realise how immeasurably wicked mortal sin must be, since for one such sin, God will cast the soul into everlasting flames. We ought to see a new meaning also in the words of our Saviour: “For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” Let us, therefore, keep ever in mind the advice given to us by the Redemptorist Fathers during their missions and retreats:

Remember, Dear Christian: You have but one soul to save, One God to love and to serve, One eternity to expect. Death will soon come, Judgment will follow, And then Heaven or Hell for ever. Therefore, O Child of Jesus and Mary, Avoid Sin And

all dangerous Occasions of Sin, Pray without ceasing, Go frequently to Confession and Holy Communion. Never omit the Rosary every day. Because, as St. Alphonsus assures us: "No one can be lost who perseveres in devotion to our Blessed Lady."

Nihil obstat:

F. MOYNIHAN,

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:

D. MANNIX,

Archiepiscopus Melbournensis.

1945